

GNOT 2026 *National Format*

Phase 1 – Club & State Qualifying Events

Clubs and states will continue to conduct qualifying events under existing arrangements.

The first phase is not changing from 2025. During this first phase there will be club and regional qualification events as has been the case in the past. There is a charge per team payable to the ABF for these qualification events. This charge is for each new team that enters a club qualifying event - even if the team is made up of players who have already played in another qualifying event. Also, if you have new teams that enter at the Regional Final phase (assuming this is allowed), they'd need to pay as well. The payment covers the team for the whole event - there's not a new fee per session.

Some regions **may** be entitled to qualify an additional team to the next phase. Those regions will have already received separate correspondence from me so if you have not received anything there is no change to the teams that your region can send to the next phase.

Phase 2 – Online National Qualifying Final

Dates: Friday 18 September – Sunday 20 September 2026

Format: Online

Field: 64 teams

Duration: 2.5 days (0.5 days less than previously)

Phase two **will be run online** (on RealBridge) over a 3-day weekend (Friday September 18 through Sunday September 20).

Players who are not familiar with RealBridge will be offered some training.

The format of this event will be the same as last years Online Qualifying Final.

As was the case previously, the event will run as a knockout with the losing teams moving into a Swiss repechage.

There will be FOUR stanzas per day with each stanza comprising 12 boards. Each knockout match will be over two stanzas. Each match in the Swiss will be 12 boards.

The TWO teams that have **not** been knocked out at the conclusion of the FIFTH round will not be required to play the last two stanzas, as they will progress to the phase 3 knockout event (see below).

The TWO teams that were knocked out in the FIFTH round will join the Swiss.

At the conclusion of the Swiss, the top TWO placed teams will progress to the phase 3 knockout event (see below).

The next eight highest placed non-metropolitan team will have a round robin-style event of seven matches, and it is envisaged that a one -set final will then be held. This is still under discussion.

To accommodate all time zones the first match will commence at 11AM AEST and the fourth stanza should finish by 5:35PM AEST.

Teams may comprise 4, 5 or 6 players.

The entry fee per team will be \$400.

From Phase 2:

1. **8 Open teams** qualify for the F2F National Final
2. **12 Non-Metro teams** qualify for the F2F National Final

(Previously: 4 Open and 8 Non-Metro teams)

Phase 3 – Face-to-Face National Final

Dates: Friday 27 November – Sunday 29 November 2026

Venue: Queensland Contract Bridge Club (QCBC), Brisbane

Tournament Organisers: Kim and Ray Ellaway

Open Final (8 teams):

Quarter Final → Semi Final → Final and playoff for 3rd place

Non-Metro Final (12 teams):

Format: 12 x 14 board matches with a round-robin for the first 11 matches and then first plays second, third plays fourth through to eleventh plays 12th.

All participants will be expected to remain at the venue for the closing ceremony and presentation of medals.

Non-Brisbane based participants in the face-to-face finals will receive a travel subsidy the amount of which will be determined by the ABF based on where they are travelling from.

The venue in Brisbane and the timing of all matches will be communicated prior to phase two.

There will be no additional entry fee for the face-to-face finals.

This revised format enables the ABF to reduce the entry fees for phase two from the previous \$400 per team whilst still providing the opportunity for many more players across Australia to earn Gold points without having to travel.

Further information will be provided in due course by the Tournament Organizer.

NEW EVENT: GNOT PLATE

A new open-entry gold point teams' event will be run alongside the National Final.

Event: Grand National Open Teams Plate

Dates: Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 November

Venue: QCBC, Brisbane

Format: Teams, 8 x 14 board matches

Masterpoints: Gold (Grade A2 – same level as major gold congresses)

Entry Fee: \$100 per player (2 days)

Additional feature:

Teams eliminated from the quarter finals of the National Final will be required to play in the Plate.

Losing semi-finalists will play off for third.

Quarter finalists playing in the Plate will do so at **no additional charge**.

The purpose of this event is to:

1. Improve the atmosphere of the Finals weekend,
2. Increase participation,
3. Provide additional gold-point opportunities, and

4. Help offset the cost of running the larger Phase 3 national finals.

FEES AND FINANCIAL SETTINGS

The following fee changes for 2026 will apply:

1. **Club qualifying entry fee:** increasing from \$10 to \$14 per team**
2. **National Final entry fee:** increasing from \$300 to \$400 per team

This increase in the club qualifying fee is the first increase in many years. The national final entry fee will remain significantly below the historical F2F entry level of \$750.

** Note for pairs based qualifying events the entry fee is \$7 per pair and the ABF only requires one payment per player irrespective of the number of qualifying events they participate in.

POINTS OF CONTACT

1. **Phase 1 & Phase 2 (Qualifying and Online Final):** Fraser Rew
2. **Phase 3 & Plate Event:** Kim and Ray Ellaway
3. **Entry Fee Administration:** Margaret Cusack

Supplementary regulations will be circulated in due course.